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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 13 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Miculescu ..... (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 51: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/66/20)

1. **Mr. Yadav** (India), reviewing India's main space achievements in 2011, said the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle had placed RESOURCESAT-2 and two auxiliary satellites, YouthSat and X-Sat, into orbit. Two advanced communications satellites, GSAT-8 and the Highly Adaptable Satellite (HYLAS), had also been launched and the GSAT-12 communication satellite had been injected into an elliptical transfer orbit. Moreover, India had developed the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III, a much heavier class of vehicle. In addition, Megha-Tropiques, the Indo-French satellite for monitoring the tropical atmosphere, launched jointly on 12 October 2011, would contribute to the international scientific community's climate research. India planned to launch more remote sensing and communications satellites in the coming months.

2. The Indian space programme continued to integrate the advances in space technology into national development goals. India had concluded international cooperation agreements with more than 35 countries and organizations, and shared its space technology expertise and services with others. For example, the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, based in India, had benefited scholars from 48 countries inside and outside the region.

3. **Mr. Andrabi** (Pakistan) said that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) played an important role in maximizing the benefits of space capabilities, in particular for the environment, health and disaster mitigation. It should ensure that the benefits reached also the developing countries; and for their part, the developed countries must give priority to sharing experiences, transferring technology and making data available. All States must have rational and equitable access to the geostationary orbit. The international community needed a common vision for using advanced space research to address climate change, food security and global health.

4. Through its Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) Pakistan had made steady progress in the application of space science and technology in a whole range of fields, including sustainable development. SUPARCO provided useful support to agriculture, the backbone of Pakistan's economy, by monitoring crops and analysing environmental and ground conditions, while contributing to the study of forests, glaciers, climate, water and geology. It had been researching the use of remote sensing and geospatial information systems to support socio-economic projects: for example, the mapping of waterways to prevent water loss through seepage.

5. Space-based emergency communication and disaster management support were crucial, as Pakistan's experience had shown in the 2005 earthquake and the recent recurring flood devastation. SUPARCO was looking for long-term solutions to manage monsoon flooding and water storage for future use. It operated a network of three vertical ionospheric sounders and two geomagnetic observatories, from which the data were being shared with the World Data Centre for cooperative studies of climate and the upper atmosphere. Since 1990, Pakistan had been gathering data for search and rescue operations as a participant in the International COSPAS-SARSAT Programme. Pakistan's communications satellite PAKSAT-1R had expanded Pakistan's telecommunication infrastructure and helped to promote the use of satellite communications, in particular for socio-economic development.

6. Pakistan was a party to the five core United Nations treaties on outer space. Space was the common heritage of humanity and should not be the province of any military doctrine. Negotiations on a comprehensive convention would help to meet the need for confidence-building and greater transparency in space activities. Because preventing an arms race in outer space was relevant to the work of both, the Conference on Disarmament and COPUOS should maintain a working relationship and communicate with each other.

7. **Ms. Fogarty** (Australia) said that, in view of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), her country welcomed the focus placed by COPUOS on that particular use of space-derived geospatial data. Australia's space policy would help to build the country's capacity to estimate greenhouse gas emissions from land-based activities, which accounted for its and most of the world's emissions. Australia was sharing its experiences and technologies with other countries, to help them develop their own monitoring capabilities. For example, it contributed to the intergovernmental Group on Earth

Observations, which assisted countries with forest observation. In its own region, it was installing a new ground receiving station to improve shared access to satellite data and was committed to funding for the Indonesia-Australia Forest Carbon Partnership. Australia had also hosted the seventeenth session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, at which it had been agreed to launch a regional readiness review to determine the ability of its member countries and institutions to profit from key climate-related satellite missions. It had also hosted workshops to help East African countries build their own carbon monitoring systems, as part of its support for global sustainable development.

8. The benefits of space-based data went beyond land use analysis, however. Australia supported the Integrated Marine Observing System, which used data from satellites to analyse the role of oceans in climate change in coastal areas, a vital issue for countries in the Pacific. Coordination in the sphere of Earth observation data was important for supporting activities related to sustainability and climate change, in particular. In the belief that access to remote sensing data should be made easier and more affordable, Australia was cooperating with other countries in the region to facilitate access and build capacity.

9. **Mr. Gobalakrishnan** (Malaysia) said that, as part of its commitment to global cooperation in the use of outer space, his Government had recently decided to expand its satellite development programme to build the RazakSAT-2 Earth observation satellite, which would operate in near-equatorial orbit and in cooperation with other equatorial countries. Malaysia had in addition hosted the fourth Joint Project Team meeting of Sentinel Asia in July 2011, organized jointly with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency. His country intended to become a hub for satellite manufacturing services in South-East Asia and, following the completion of its assembly, integration and testing facility in mid-2012, it would be able to offer a range of services.

10. Nationally, Malaysia had organized various activities in the past year to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the first human space flight, and had continued to offer special educational programmes intended to inspire young people to explore space science and understand the benefits of space. In 2012, Malaysia expected to complete the framing of its space policy and the drafting of outer space legislation.

11. **Mr. Sorreta** (Philippines) said his country upheld the principle of equal access to outer space and to space-based information for all States, irrespective of their level of development. Developing countries as well must be able to enjoy the enormous benefits of space science by developing the needed skills. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs had kept the Philippine national space administration abreast of space science developments through international workshops, congresses and other exchanges of scientific information. The administration had made modest improvements to its facilities but needed more financial and human resources to make real strides.

12. Accurate statistics produced by a variety of regional and global institutions must be made readily available to support disaster reduction and emergency response. Assisted by the United Nations Platform of Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), for example, the Philippines had made effective use of satellite imagery to monitor typhoons; and UN-SPIDER continued to help it improve its disaster risk reduction and emergency response practices.

13. **Mr. González** (Cuba) said the legal regime governing outer space could not prevent an arms race in space. Unless the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating forum in the field, urgently negotiated an agreement to prevent such an arms race, none of the promising space applications would have a future. COPUOS had special responsibility for promoting the peaceful uses of outer space and should refine the ethical principles and legal instruments guaranteeing a peaceful, fair and non-discriminatory use of space applications.

14. Despite limited resources, Cuba was investing more in space research and applications for peaceful purposes, such as meteorological applications for predicting natural disasters or detecting forest fires. Every State had the right to explore and use outer space for the benefit of all humanity but not all States had the means to achieve autonomous space capabilities in the foreseeable future. Consequently, as more nations engaged in space activities, bilateral and multilateral cooperation and the need to exchange experience and technology acquired more urgency, especially for the developing countries. COPUOS should work more closely with the Committee on Sustainable Development with a view to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable

Development, and turn its attention to climate change and food security, in particular. Cuba believed that through international cooperation all countries could responsibly enjoy the possibilities of space research and applications.

15. **Mr. Govender** (South Africa) said that, in the 50 years since the first human space flight, the United Nations had, through COPUOS, developed the regulatory framework that governed the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. Through other bodies and programmes, it had also led the way in integrating the uses of space into the development agenda. The United Nations must continue to promote the application of geospatial data in many spheres, and had a pivotal role to play in raising awareness and building capacity internationally, regionally and nationally, using Earth observation applications to meet the objectives of sustainable development and facilitating access by all countries to the benefits of those applications. In that connection, South Africa was encouraged by the close relations between COPUOS and many regional and inter-regional mechanisms for space cooperation in furthering global agendas.

16. South Africa had played a role in promoting the peaceful uses of space science and technology. In partnership with other African countries, it had launched the African Resource Management Constellation of satellites, whose data would be used for agriculture, climate monitoring and housing. South Africa was about to start work on a new operational satellite to replace its own locally built and formerly low-orbiting pathfinder model. Seeking to cooperate with more of the spacefaring nations, his Government had signed an agreement with the Russian Federation and was negotiating another with India.

17. The International Astronautical Congress, recently hosted by South Africa, had enabled the international space community to discover South Africa's activities in the space technology field. Cognizant of the link between space and society, his Government had used space technology to reach remote rural areas; since 2000, for example, it had set up 86 telemedicine sites across the country and signed telemedicine agreements with other African States. Its National Aerospace Centre coordinated the teaching of aerospace engineering, offering grants to students in the field. The Government, in order to raise awareness of space technology, had organized nationwide informative events in which several national and international scientific institutions had participated. Lastly, with African Union support, South Africa hoped to host the Square Kilometre Array telescopic project, in partnership with several other African countries, thus boosting Africa's scientific development as it yielded global benefits.

18. **Mr. Oyedele** (Nigeria) said space technology was vital for sustainable development, helping the understanding and prediction of environmental change and the development of agriculture, especially in developing countries. Consequently, Nigeria endorsed the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

19. Space exploration should not set spacefaring nations against the rest but should be a cooperative endeavour benefiting the international community as a whole. Nigeria had therefore supported the African Resource Management Constellation, a regional initiative to develop space technology and use it to further sustainable development. With assistance from the British space industry, his country had launched two high-resolution satellites, NigeriaSat 2 and NigeriaSat X, aimed at using remote sensing to improve natural resource management, disaster management, food security and urban planning.

20. The Committee itself must urgently consider developing legal mechanisms to guarantee the safety of outer space, in view of the amount of space debris, which according to United Nations figures, posed a growing danger to space exploration.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.